

HIGHWALL INN



by Ian Cooper



Honoring Greg Stafford
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#WeAreAllUs



HIGHWALL INN

WHAT IS THIS?

HIGHWALL INN IS A SCENARIO FOR CHAOSIUM'S HEROQUEST Glorantha role-playing game. A copy of that book is necessary to play this game. No other HeroQuest game titles are required to play this game, but *Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes* and *The Coming Storm* expand upon the background of this scenario.

This scenario is the HeroQuest Glorantha scenario for #weareallus, the inaugural Greg Stafford memorial day. Greg created the world of Glorantha and founded Chaosium. On this day we hope that you will gather some friends and play a game together in his memory.

CORE ACTIVITY

The PCs are travelers who take shelter in a remote inn, trying to evade both a storm and a pack of ghouls.

EMOTIONAL STAKES

The PCs have different reasons for being on the road in winter: some seek to free a comrade captured by a Lunar bounty hunter, others to rob a wealthy merchant, one to proselytize his faith. All of them will come into conflict, either with each other or other travelers sheltering at the inn.

At the same time, the ghouls and the inn's murderous innkeepers present a threat to the guests at the inn. If they fail to co-operate they may die.

PREMISE

Several groups travel the road between Alone and Herongreen, braving the cold of Dark Season. One group is a bounty hunter and her prisoner, a notorious Sartarite rebel. Following them are the rebel's comrades who seek to free her from her captor. Two thieves travel the road to meet with their partners-in-crime. They hope to rob a merchant who travels the road after trading with the trolls. A holy man defies the cold taking the word of his god, Yelmadio, the light in the darkness, with him.

A winter blizzard endangers the lives of all these travelers. The storm will kill anyone caught in the open without shelter. Ghouls

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Thanks to the many fans at conventions such as UK Games Expo, Dragonmeet and Kraken who have braved Highwall Inn.

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HEROQUEST

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from the Woods of the Dead use the darkness of the storm to hunt the travelers, hoping for new meat.

The travelers must seek shelter in Highwall Inn, the only safe location on the road. But the murderous owners of Highwall Inn are worshippers of Krarsht, the goddess of the Waiting Mouth, who have a deal with the ghouls to provide them with “meat,” a deal that has already claimed the lives of many visitors to the inn.

SITUATION

As the scenario begins a violent Dark Season blizzard has blown into Dragon Pass from the North; a Valind Storm blown down into the Pass by a gale force Howler. The Howler Umbroli screams and moans as it gusts its way through the Pass, uprooting trees, driving sleet and snow ahead of it. The temperature is about 5°F, below freezing, but with the wind it feels more like -20°F. At this temperature exposed skin develops frostbite in 30 minutes, hypothermia can set in within an hour.

The clouds conceal the rays of the sun and ghouls set out to hunt travelers along the road. They hope for easy pickings, preying on those who flounder in the snow.

The PCs are on the road during the storm—they need shelter from the weather, and the undead hunting them.

One refuge lies along the road, for those who mistime their journey and need to seek shelter: Highwall Inn. But the innkeepers

are worshippers of the goddess Krarsht, and have a deal with the ghouls. They deliver meat to the ghouls, sourced from visitors to their inn, in return for being left alone.

Cheated of their meal, the ghouls besiege the inn. Meeting with the innkeepers they demand that they provide them meat from their guests, or they will attack the inn and feast on everyone inside, including the innkeepers.

Faced with the threat from the ghouls, Jafoska and Baran must decide whether to procure more victims or flee through their tunnels...

CAST

THE STAFF

Jafoska and Baran run the Highwall Inn. They provide comfortable rooms, good—though not exceptional—food, ale, and wine and a warm welcome to their customers.

They also murder guests who they believe will not be missed, and feed them to King Brangbane and his ghouls in macabre feasts. They smuggle weapons, armor, and supplies that no other sane person would trade with the ghouls.

And they worship Krarsht, the goddess of the Hungry Mouth.

JAFOSKA WARM-HEART 𐄇𐄇𐄇

Jafoska Warm-Heart is a beautiful woman, who was born into the Bachad tribe. Trolls from the Redstone Caverns wiped out her clan when they tried to settle too close to the Indigo Mountains. The survivors fled to Alone. Orphaned, Jafoska survived for a time begging on the streets, until she was taken in by a brothel madam, and earned a living by whoring, mainly for Lunar soldiers.

She despised her life, and the men who called on her. She became cynical, preferred confessions of love from cheating husbands, and mercenary, learning that even her body could be traded by someone else. When one of her clients, Derik Finehair, offered

WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE?

There is more information on the Woods of the Dead and its ghoulish inhabitants in the Heroquest Glorantha supplement, *The Coming Storm*. They also pose a threat in the campaign outlined in *The Eleven Lights*.

CAN I PLAY THIS WITH MY OWN PCS?

This scenario was originally written for convention play. The pregenerated characters have tensions with each other and the other residents of the inn, creating a stand-off. If you choose to play this with your own PCs instead, you will need to engineer a similar setup.

It helps to answer a number of questions.

Why are the players on the road to or from Alone? Replicating one of the motives of the pregenerated NPCs may be the easiest option.

Are your players rebels against their Empire? Perhaps one of their number, or an NPC known to them, has been captured by the bounty-hunter Pharandra Glittering-Eye. One of your PCs may take the place of Ralda Red-Hands as Pharandra's captive. Or else, pick a rebel known to the PCs, who you believe they would set out to rescue.

Are your players thieves or bandits (which includes a lot of adventurers)? Then they are part of the attempt to heist Griselda Far-Walker. The victims in the cellar ought to be known to the PCs, perhaps as members of their criminal enterprise.

Do your PCs have enemies in your campaign? A clan they are feuding with? Are there Lunar soldiers or priests who appear as regular opponents for their rebel activities? If so, could you explain why they are in the inn? Your goal is to force the PCs into a decision—work with their enemies against the ghouls, or confront them.

You will need to decide if you are going to start *in medias res*, with the players arriving along with the snow, or if you would prefer to play out the PC's journey to Alone, or back again.

to buy her contract from her madam, she leapt at the chance to escape.

Derik Finehair was a priest of Krarsht and enjoyed very lucrative arrangements smuggling for the ghouls, who most normal people would never trade with, including providing them with feasts of human flesh. The embittered Jafoska, who had always felt abandoned by Ernalda, proved a willing convert to goddess of the Hungry Mouth, but Derik was not the lover she sought. That was Derik's apprentice, Baran the Chop, who proved an attentive and undemanding lover.

When Brangbane's lieutenants suggested that Jafoska might make a new finger-woman for their lord, Jafoska came up with a new arrangement and offered up Derik instead. Now, she runs the inn as the new Tongue of Krarsht, and keeps to the old arrangements with the ghouls.

She keeps telling Baran they will quit, once they have made a big enough pot of money to start over somewhere else, like New Pavis.

Tribe: Bachad **Age:** 33

Keywords: Harlot, Priestess **Magic:** Initiate of Krarsht (♠)

Look: Long dark hair bound in a single braid with copper wire, orange eyes, olive skin, high cheekbones, full lips, slender.

BARAN THE CHOP ♠+♥

Baran was born in the pens of Slavewall. Sold young to a Lunarized family of the Hengkisi tribe, he toiled on their estates, biting his tongue, remaining obedient, and gaining enough trust to be trained as a butcher. All his rage boiled out one dark night, when he used his knives to murder the family, and feast on their corpses, before fleeing.

Murder, crime, and desperation moved him from city to city until he washed up in Highwall Inn, one step ahead of vengeance. Derik Finehair recognized his worth and took him as a willing initiate of Krarsht and cook.

Try as he might, Baran could not persuade Derik that one day the "good thing" they had at Highwall Inn, smuggling metal, slaves, and flesh to ghouls, would end, when someone came looking for dead kin, and they should move on to New Pavis once they had a decent "starter fund." The old priest seemed convinced he could build a large temple here.

All that changed when the old priest took a young wife, Jafoska, and Baran found someone who shared his ambition to move beyond the Highwall Inn.

Tribe: Mellmuri (Tarsh) **Age:** 27

Keywords: Butcher **Magic:** Initiate of Krarsht (♥)

Look: Fox-faced, with a shock of orange hair, and a square beard.

Krarsht's ♠ divine affinity enables followers to emulate the Hungry Mouth herself. She gives her worshippers the power to transform their mouth into a fanged maw that drips acid, can spit acid, strike up to 10 feet with an elongated shocking tongue, spit a sticky web called pratzim, or chew through rock and metal. Krarsht is a demon of the Predark and her divine affinity allows a worshipper to summon and command krarshtkids.

GHOULS

The ghouls of the Woods of the Dead originate in the curse Sartar placed upon the Dinacoli king Brangbane. Brangbane was an evil king of the Dinacoli, who sought and obtained a grimoire on necromancy that offered him immortality. The grimoire contained a spell that required Brangbane to brew a soup every season, a soup whose key ingredient was human flesh and bones. To feed his soup Brangbane contracted a series of marriages, courting poor families who were eager to receive the king's generous dowry of cows for their daughter's hand in marriage, and only too ready to accept that the lack of communication was due to Brangbane's elevated status. Brangbane sliced his wives' fingers, one-by-one, into his soup, until they ran out of fingers whereupon he took other body parts and eventually murdered them and sought out another new wife. Sartar discovered this evil, and cursed the king, so that no food could nourish him. But Brangbane outwitted Sartar, feeding himself with the soup from his spell. His evil thanes joined him, imbibing the soup and soon others, who feared death, such as oath-breakers, joined them.

Repeated consumption of the Foul Soup turned Brangbane and his thanes into ghouls, undead creatures who sustain themselves on human flesh. Ghouls look much as they did in life, but over the years their skin takes on a papery

texture. Puncture their skin and they do not bleed. Their nerve endings die out and they no longer feel; they can lose a limb without shock. Ghouls seem to have tremendous strength and endurance because this lack of pain enables them to stretch their bodies to the limit and beyond. Ghouls do not rot or decay, provided they continue to regularly eat human flesh. Should they fail to eat a corpse a week, the ghoul begins to decay as age catches up with them. Light accelerates this process, quickening the process that causes the ghoul's skin to dry out, causing it to crumble. A ghoul exposed to daylight must eat more to repair the resulting damage. An already starving ghoul exposed to light begins to disintegrate, unable to repair their body. Even in this state a ghoul who is then fed a human corpse will revive. A hungry ghoul would eventually crumble, but most find food or die trying before that point.

A ghoul's howl is terrifying to living creatures; so frightful even seasoned warriors drop their weapons and flee in terror. Ghouls raise the howl when hunting prey.

A ghoul's bite injects a paralyzing poison. The poison is a High resistance.

Although a ghoul will use its bite to subdue prey, most ghouls continue to use the weapons and armor that they used in life. Most have had many years to perfect their weapon skills.

THE SECRET OF HIGHWALL INN

The inn's proprietors, Jafoska and Baran, survive despite their proximity to the Woods of the Dead by murdering travelers who they do not believe will be missed, and offering their butchered corpses to the ghouls in horrific feasts at the inn. Jafoska seduces the guests, kills them, and robs them, and Baran butchers them. They hang the meat in the shrine, to ensure they have food when their ghoulish guests decide to call. The innkeepers are not sure what would happen if they had no meat, but they do not want to find out.

Jafoska and Baran have amassed a small fortune from robbery, enough to set themselves up elsewhere and do have an escape tunnel under the inn and out beyond the wall

KRARSHTKIDS

From the parts of Krarsht hacked off by Storm Bull in the Great Darkness grew the krarshtkids. Resembling much smaller versions of the Waiting Mouth, a krarshtkid has a central body 3 to 4 feet in diameter with six legs jutting around its perimeter at roughly equal spacing. Krarshtkids spit a conical web consisting of a disgusting cohesive and viscous liquid called pratzim at their foes. Pratzim binds and entangles its target. Once entangled, the krarshtkid uses its extremely long tongue to deliver a potentially fatal shock and then bites its prey with fangs carrying paralyzing venom. These creatures can eat anything but favor loam, clay, sand, and limestone. They are the primary builders of the underground Krarsht temples and tunnels. As they eat, mature krarshtkids make individual 10 feet diameter tunnels, turning the earth and stone they munch into a form of stone (through their digestive tracks) with which they line their tunnel walls.

HARVAR'S THANES

Harvar has dispatched thanes from Alda-Chur to Alone, to better assess who is loyal to him there, and begin bringing the exiles of that region under his dominion. "Too many of my enemies have taken refuge in the Hidden Valley," Harvar has told them. "Go to Alone, and see if you can root them out, and find a pretext to kill them."

ANNSTAD LONG-LEGS ☿+X

Annstad loves to fight, and loves to kill. It is the ultimate test, two people with their lives on the line, betting it all on their skill with a blade. He killed his first man when he was just twelve in a game of kick-the-ball because he caught him cheating. He killed every year after that, as the victim's kin sought blood vengeance. His kin were glad when he initiated to Humakt, so that they could absolve themselves of his crimes.

Annstad respects strength and despises weakness and cowardice. He follows Harvar because Harvar is the "big man" and a "big man" tends to need people like Annstad Long-Legs. Annstad has fought duels across the Far Place for Harvar, and is one of those responsible for bringing the Tovtaros low.

Annstad is less convinced by the ascendancy of the Yelmaliio cult in the Far Place under Harvar. He dislikes the regimented warfare of the Cold Sun—preferring the clash of heroes.

Annstad has little or no empathy; indeed he is a psychopath. The Humakt cult provides a place where that does not matter. Lacking emotion, he is not reckless, but cold and calculating.

Tribe: Vantaros (Tarsh) **Age:** 45

Keywords: Mercenary **Magic:** Initiate of Humakt (†)

Look: Hungry eyes, pointed nose, brown-beard that doesn't conceal his jawline, bald head.

INKARNE THE SHREW 7●R

Inkarne grew up in a wealthy guild family in Furthest, and her parents keenly pushed her toward a Lunar education via the Seven Mothers Temple, to enable the family fortunes to advance.

The dark drew Inkarné more than the light, the dead more than the living, madness and inspiration more than reason and knowledge. She gravitated toward the Jakaleel the Witch's Immortal cult; she had an affinity for the lunes, was a quick study, and became a powerful witch.

Her prodigious talents brought her to the attention of the HonEel dynasty. The dynasty was uncertain if Harvar was *their* man, or his *own* man. So they offered him the witch as a servant, but retained her as a spy.

Inkarne likes Harvar, she admires both his arrogance and strength. She is less loyal to the throne than the HonEel dynasty believe.

City: Furthest (Tarsh) **Age:** 22

Keywords: Sage **Magic:** Illuminated Initiate of Seven Mothers, Jakaleel the Witch (●●)

Look: Curly black hair, crow's feet around large brown eyes, skinny, short, black clothing, silver full moon rune pendant.

Five of Harvar's Yelmaliio-worshipping mercenaries accompany Annstad and Inkarné on the road north to Alone. They are disciplined and effective. All are mounted.

The mercenaries are:

Haloric Far-Walker: file leader; long limbed, impressive drooping moustaches; booming voice.

Danandar the Keen: good-looking, young, and filled with zeal; painfully loyal to Harvar Ironfist; painfully loyal to his god.

Yinkor the Clumsy: slightly portly; clumsy and the butt of jokes; kind and friendly; a bit cowardly but loved by his file mates.

Rastalulf the Steady: middle-aged with grey hair and beard; speaks little, but always to purpose.

Monrogh the Arful: blond hair, blue eyed; the file's fixer who seems to be able to get anything; has one-eye on everything not bolted down.

INKARNE'S MAGIC

In Heroquest it is not necessary to figure out exactly what ability an NPC is using, just narrate what it looks like and its effects. Here is some advice on narrating Inkarne's magic. Inkarne is a follower of the Jakaleel tradition, so she uses lunes for magic, either as a charm to augment her, or directly by releasing the lune to attack her opponent.

All of Inkarne's lunes appear as crimson pools of light with a woman's figure in the middle of them. The woman can appear both beautiful and horrifying depending on the type of lune. Apart from the Full Moon lunes, the lunes pulse crimson light within a pool of darkness. A Dying Moon lune flickers crimson light within the darkness about a tenth of the time. A Full Half lune has almost equal dark and light.

In a fight, Inkarne uses Dying Moon lunes ability to *Drive Mad* against her opponents or their *Render Catatonic* ability, Full Half lunes to burn her opponents with *Crimson Fire*, or demonic Empty Half Moon lunes to *Rend and Tear* her opponents.

Outside of a fight she uses her Full Moon lunes to *Learn the Truth*, and *Shine the Light of Understanding* or her Crescent Go lunes to *Heal Body*.

As well as her clothing, Inkarne is subject to a number of strictures from her relationship with her lunes: she must **sleep on the earth, tend to the dead, and defend the innocent**.

THE CARAVAN

The caravan consists of six pack-mules; Griselda; her two trollkin body slaves, Flob and Dob; her great troll slave guard, Boz; and her three kinsman from the Torkani, apprentices to her trade.

GRISELDA FAR-WALKER ○∞✦

Even when Griselda was a child, the adults watched in bemusement as she negotiated, wheedled, and conned her way into what she wanted from the other children despite being shorter than many children half her age. And the words, the words just kept coming, she had a natural aptitude for words and languages and picked up new ones effortlessly.

Raised amongst the Torkani, she moved amidst the trolls even before her adolescence, causing the clan elders many a fright when she went missing only to turn up with a trollkin in tow a few days later, saying she had "been with the uz."

Her precociousness led her to the trader's path, and she was tagging along with caravans to the troll lands before her initiation.

She has built her contacts into something lucrative, worming her way toward access to the fungi harvested by trolls and dark elves in the Sporewood. She is determined to protect her monopoly on that trade and the riches that it brings her in Jonstown, where even Minaryth Purple comes to talk to her of the uz.

She is not a fighter, not through cowardice, but size and temperament, that is what her servants are for.

Tribe: Torkani **Age:** 29

Keywords: Merchant **Magic:** Initiate of Argan Argar (●)

Look: Lean, athletic, raven hair in a bun, long fringed skirt, high leather boots, short.

Griselda's three kinsman are mooks, so we just give them names and a short bio:

Elmanth the Tall: tall, skinny, bald; softy spoken.

Vinalda Laughs-Much: Short, plump; always cheery.

Karganar the Slow: big build and size; strong; dull eyes; slow-witted.

LOCATIONS

HIGHWALL INN

This inn along the road between Alone and Herongreen provides a place of relative safety for travelers having to pass the Woods of the Dead.

The Highwall Inn is named for the strong palisade wall that surrounds it, which stands fifteen feet tall. A single gate pierces the wall. The gate is open during the day but shuttered at night. A postern gate allows entry for travelers after dark, and a copper bell allows desperate travelers to ring for attention. There are no watchtowers, nor walkways on the wall, and this limitation means those inside cannot easily see out once the gate is shut. (The rooms in the top story of the inn itself do offer some views.)

The main building is a substantial two-story wooden framed wattle and daub hall with a stone chimney.

The lower floor is a common room, along with a kitchen. A porch helps keep mud, snow and wind out of the main room. A fireplace divides the common room from the kitchen—the pots and grills used for cooking fill the common room with the smell of food. The common room itself is an open space of tables and chairs with no booths. A serving counter stands to one side, with bowls in the top for wine, and shelves for cups and bowls. There are stools at the counter itself. The ceiling is high at fifteen feet. The floor is hard earth. Small high windows give light without admitting thieves at night.

A staircase leads to the upper floor. The upper floor has one dormitory, where guests may join others in bedding down for the night: no beds or bedding are provided, but there is a hearth with a lit fire. Alternatively there are private rooms which can sleep two or three but have no fireplace and must be warmed via a brazier of hot coals. There are shuttered windows in all rooms on the upper floor. This is the only place where someone can look over the palisade wall and outside the inn itself.

There is enough space for twenty in the dormitory, and a further ten rooms provide space for twenty to thirty more. The inn is rarely that full, unless a Lunar supply caravan stops for the night.

A trapdoor in the kitchen leads to the cellar. The main cellar contains amphorae of wine, oil and grain—the ale (and bread) is made fresh—as well as sacks of root vegetables and smoked and salted meat hanging from the rafters.

EATERS OF THE DEAD

Two groups in Dragon Pass, ghouls and ogres, descended from humans and eat human flesh.

How do you tell one from another? Ogres are a human descended race, who survived the Great Darkness through cannibalism, and who now eat human flesh ritually, as part of their worship of their god Cacodemon. Ghouls are a form of unlife (or undead) who avoid the curse of Grandfather Mortal (aging and death) by ritually consuming human flesh. Other cannibal groups exist in Glorantha; all use the power of breaking the taboo of eating your own kind's flesh for ritual gain.

A secret tunnel in the cellar is hidden behind empty jars. After a squeeze it opens into a 10 foot diameter tunnel made by a krarshtkid. This tunnel leads to a web of tunnels under the inn. An explorer could wander the tunnels for hours but two locations are important: the shrine and the escape hatch.

The shrine is a simple circular room, 40 feet in diameter, with a deep pit in it and behind the pit a statue of a six-legged and fanged open mouth. The pit is the altar and represents the “hungry mouth” of Krarsht—sacrifices are thrown down it. The pit is a vertical drop for 100 feet before it meets a cross-tunnel that leads deeper into the krarshtkid tunnels here. During ceremonies the pit draws krarshtkids, which come to feed on the, usually, human offerings.

The web of tunnels under Highwall Inn is difficult to navigate if you do not know your way—vertical tunnels appear at random. The route to the surface can be found by looking for planks crossing these shafts.

Beyond the maze there is an exit, a concealed trap door, which pops up a half-mile to the south of the inn, concealed in the woods.

Outside of the main building there are a plethora of buildings. There is an outhouse, a stable with enough space for the caravans that pass up and down the road to stable their animals for the night, a strong room for storing valuable goods in transit, and a pair of raised grain huts storing additional grain, as well as the inn's well.

WOODS OF THE DEAD

The Woods of the Dead are a cool, humid, dark, and forbidding spruce-fir forest. The forest is continuous, with occasional clearings for the ghoulish villages. The forest canopy has grown thick with few people to cut it, and little light penetrates to the forest floor which is littered with half-rotting logs. Undergrowth is patchy, just some bushes and wildflowers. Sight lines are short, much of the forest seems uniform, and it is easy to become turned around and lost.

There is little animal life within the forest. The presence of the ghouls has frightened away most of the deer and hares that would normally make their home here. Crows however are here in abundance. They caw from the treetops to warn the living, clustering around the ghoulish villages where their hoarse calls can be deafening. The crows are Humakt's servants feeding off any carrion in the forest and nearby lands, denying the flesh to the ghouls.

Brangbane and his ghouls live in a cruel mockery of their former lives, dwelling in halls clustered into villages—but instead of animal livestock they herd humans. The humans labor to feed themselves grain,

and the ghouls in turn slaughter them, and hang the bodies to rot in sheds, until they are ripe for consumption. All parts of their livestock are used, clothes are woven from human hair and human skin is tanned into hides. Because of the utility of their “stock” to supply them year round, the ghouls hunt the lands surrounding the Woods of the Dead for additional meat for their tables.

BEGINS WITH

Traveling in winter is never a great idea, but sometimes you need to get somewhere, even in Dark Season. So you pull on your sheepskin boots, gloves, and jerkin, fold your warmest cloak around you, and strap on your snowshoes.

Traveling along the road between Alone and Herongreen is perilous at the best of times, as the road into the Hidden Valley runs right through the Woods of the Dead, where the ghoulish king Brangbane dines on human flesh, in defiance of Sartar. But you mutter a prayer to the Finger Women and set out anyway.

Traveling along the road between Alone and Herongreen in Dark Season may have been one of too many bad ideas...

A Howler gale comes up blowing the Valind winds down from the North. The Orlanthi amongst you have some warning, but the others are caught out by this change in the weather. Driving snow means you cannot see more than fifty feet, but worse is the cold. In the wind you can feel your face beginning to freeze, your thoughts and movement are becoming sluggish. You need to find shelter, and soon.

One place of safety lies on the road: Highwall Inn. Can you reach it?

DEVELOPING THE PREMISE

BLIZZARD

DILEMMA

Thick snow is falling. The gale force winds drive it almost horizontally into you. The cruelty of a Howler wind drives it, roaring as it cuts through your clothing. Lightning flashes, and thunder peels out—Thundersnow! You huddle tighter into your cloak, but cold bites at your face, frostbite nipping your ears, nose and fingers. The cold and damp seems to get into the marrow of your bones.

You know that you will be dead soon, if you don't find shelter!

Play group by group. The order of play is:

- The Pilgrim
- The Moon Dogs
- The Rebels
- The Thieves

CHOICES

The question here for all of the groups is: how do you survive? Frame a simple contest as *Avoiding Harm from Cold Weather*. At worst anyone can use a cultural keyword for basic survival skills but encourage the PCs to be more creative. On any victory the PC avoids cold injury, on a defeat they suffer frostbite or hypothermia, the severity of which acts as a penalty to further physical activity and morale. On a Major or Complete Defeat the PC has severe exposure. They collapse into the snow, and require help to move on.

CONSEQUENCES

The PCs need to find shelter, and if they suffer from exposure make it clear that their condition will worsen. If a group all fail at this contest, and thus cannot help themselves forward, then have one of the other groups stumble across them lying prostrate in the snow. Their survival now depends on the kindness of strangers.

GHOULS

DILEMMA

You hear a terrible howling in the air that freezes you to the very marrow of your soul. Looking behind you there are armored warriors emerging from the trees. Their skin is pale, their long hair whips around their faces.

This close to the Woods of the Dead, this can only mean one thing. Ghouls! Unlife!

All the ghouls have a similar description: they wear an assortment of scale and plate metal armor; none of the parts are matching, and are obviously looted from the dead. They bear hide-bound shields that seem to be made from many faces, skinned from their owners, tanned, stitched and used to cover the wood. They have long hair that whips in the wind, yet they do not seem to feel the cold. Their skin is snow-white.

Seeing the PCs, quarry for their hunt, the ghouls scream.

Play group by group. The order of play is:

- The Pilgrim
- The Rebels
- The Moon Dogs
- The Thieves

Choices

The scream can paralyze people with fear, or just make them run blindly through the snow, stumbling and falling. Frame the contest as one of showing *Courage against the Eaters of the Dead*. On a Marginal or Minor Defeat the PCs just blindly run, but on a Major or Complete Defeat, the PCs are frozen in their tracks. This “fear factor” forms a penalty to any subsequent contest with the ghouls.

All groups should be outnumbered two-to-one by the ghouls at this point. Do they stand and fight, or flee through the blizzard? If anyone has lost in the contest against the ghouls scream, they will not wish to stand and fight.

Whichever choice the PCs make, run this as a Group Simple Contest.

In a physical confrontation remember when describing a fight that the ghouls are strong and ignore pain—the nerves in their bodies are dead allowing them to push them to extremes and feel nothing.

So that each group moving through the snow does not repeat another group's encounter, use the following variations on the ghoul encounters to maintain interest:

The Phase of the Moon is important to any Lunar magician. This episode begins on Wild Day, and there is a Full Moon. This means the Lunar magicians can act without stretch penalties when using Glamours. This will change, at nightfall, as the day changes to Empty Half and glamours will receive stretch penalties.



Dogs

Two ghouls hold a pack of humans, dressed in ill-fitting rags, on chains attached to shackles around their throats. The ragged humans strain at their chains, and sniff the air like hunting dogs.

The ghouls let lose their “dogs”, to drag their prey down. The “dogs” grapple, claw and bite to bring down their prey as a pack. The ghouls want living victims, as new “cattle” for their steeds.

Riders

Ghouls are mounted on horses, and try to ride down their prey. They carry a weighted net between two riders and seek to ensnare runners, riding them down with their speed. If pressed, they can draw swords to defend themselves, but dismount to fight.

Runners

These ghouls are on foot and try to run down their prey. They are tireless for their muscles do not need rest as humans do. They are quick because they don't feel the pain of stretching their bodies to the limit. They are lightly armed and armored. They use quarterstaves to trip and strike their foes, hoping to take them alive.

Feast

The PCs stumble upon the site of a ghoul ambush. The remnants of a caravan are scattered down the road—a progression of dead mules with looted saddlebags. There are signs of a struggle with broken weapons along the track. Ghouls, face down in some fresh kills, eating the entrails, look up to see the PCs.

CONSEQUENCES

Hopefully, this scene should turn into a chase across the snow.

The most likely result is that the PCs flee, but have to help each other to the safety of the inn after a few of them fall to the ghoul's demoralizing howl. It is possible that ghouls defeat a group and capture some. In this case, change a subsequent group's encounter to be stumbling across the ghoul and their captives.

If there is no one left to free captives then the captives will be taken to the ghoul's hunting camp, and chained by their ankles. The ghouls intend to take them back to the village where they

will lead brutal but short lives. Spice things up by having a hungry ghoul kill someone else on the line, so that they will rot before they eat them.

POINT OF NO RETURN

REFUGE

DILEMMA

Arriving at Highwall Inn the gates are shut. The blizzard howls, drowning out sounds apart from the screams of hunting ghouls. A copper bell, intended to signal for entry to the inn, swings wildly in the wind its clapper peeling out a tinny tune, which no one attends to.

Made with fifteen-foot poles cut from the forest, with sharpened points, the palisade wall is high, famously so. No one is looking out of the second story windows towards the gate.

Safety lies beyond the walls, but how to get in?

CHOICES

This problem may be different for each group, depending on their magic. Orlanthi movement magic should solve this problem, someone just needs to leap or fly over the palisade and then open the postern gate from inside. But what about groups arriving without magic? Climbing is possible, but you have to deal with a wall taller than a man made from sharpened posts.

The order of arrival is:

- The Pilgrim
- The Thieves
- The Rebels
- The Moon Dogs

CONSEQUENCES

If a PC fails to get in, they may be able to wait for the next group to arrive. Waiting around in the cold to get in risks further injury from exposure. Make any PCs trapped outside get a victory in a contest to *Survive Exposure To Cold*. Modifiers from any existing cold injuries apply to this contest. When the next group arrives, are the waiting PCs confused by their approach? Are they ghouls or fellow travelers? If someone was defeated in the contest against the ghoul's scream, have them get a victory in a contest to *Stand Your Ground*. If a couple of PC groups fail, it may be worth a ghoul advance party arriving and precipitating a desperate fight at the gates. Other groups might arrive as this fight is ongoing.

THE COMPOUND

DILEMMA

Once inside the compound, the PCs may be surprised that there is no obvious watch or defenses. There are stables, an outhouse, a strong-room and other outbuildings. With no walkway or towers, it is not perhaps clear why the ghouls don't assault the walls and overwhelm the defenders.

THE FINGER WOMAN

The Finger Women are the avenging ghosts of Brangbane's wives. Denied proper burial their souls wander; unable to find peace until Brangbane is brought to account for his crimes. They haunt the Woods of the Dead still, working to aid those who fight against the ghouls. All Sartarites know a ritual to summon the help of the Finger Women against the ghouls. A player hero can invoke the Finger Women at their *Heortling Culture* rating when struggling against ghouls in the Woods of the Dead or on its borders. The ghosts appear to attack the ghouls. They appear as beautiful young women, but transform into nightmarish forms to strike a ghoul, biting with their teeth and pummeling with their mutilated hands.

CHOICES

The PCs might want to look around the compound before entering the inn. Nothing stops them doing so. They can quickly discover that there must be other guests at the inn as the stables contain the mules of an Issaries caravan and seven horses from some important or wealthy travelers.

The animals are all skittish. The thunderstorm has them rattled, and their more sensitive ears have picked up the howls of ghouls, despite the dampening effect of the falling snow. They may kick out at anyone who enters their stall, and whose smell is not familiar to them.

If anyone searches for it, the caravan's goods are locked in a storeroom which is sealed with an Issaries locking rune magic that only permits Griselda's passage. Attempts to open the door result in a glowing trade rune outlining the door as it "sticks" in the frame. Brute force can still break down the door, and Lanbril cult magic can allow passage if the thief can overcome the merchant's magic. But it serves to deter less-determined theft.

If any of the thieves try to break in to the storeroom using magic, frame a Simple Contest of *Pass Lock*. A defeat suggests less that their magic fails against the lock, more that someone leaves the Common Room at that moment, perhaps looking to relieve themselves, and catches them opening a sealed door. Questions are likely, and unsatisfactory answers will likely prompt a report to Griselda and the inn's owners.

Although there are valuable goods in the strong room, Griselda keeps her most valuable fungi in a box carried by Boz, her Great Troll.

CONSEQUENCES

If thieves are caught "in the act" then Griselda will demand that Jafoska deny them the safety of the inn. Jafoska refuses, saying that to send the thieves outside would be a death sentence but that she will ask them to leave once the storm clears. In fact, Jafoska realizes that these must be accomplices to the two thieves she has already captured and that they would make ideal additions to her larder. She can simply take them in the night, and then claim she was forced to eject them from the inn for further bad behavior.

This is likely to set up an ambush by Jafoska and Baran during the game.

THE COMMON ROOM

DILEMMA

Passing in through the door to the inn, a traveler's eyes take a moment to adjust to the gloom. But after a few moments, the light from the fire and some oil lamps reveals a warm, even cozy scene.

A large party of seven sits on the furthest side of the room from the fire. Two men and two women sit on the benches, they obviously defer to one of the women, whose torc suggests she is a thane. A great troll stands against the wall nearby, watchfully, and two trollkin dash about fetching drinks and food for the people.

Close to the fire sits an armed group. Five soldiers crowd around one end of the table, playing a game of dice, with cries of delight and rage. A woman and a man sit at the other end, deep in conversation.

If other PCs have arrived already, newly arrived PCs see them wherever they have chosen to sit.

VISIBILITY OF MAGIC

Remember that Gloranthan magic is not subtle, it is visible when you cast it, either because the caster glows with magical energy, or becomes transformed in some way, or the object of the caster's magic does. This makes it hard to use magic with subterfuge.



CHOICES

Introduce the PCs to the guests. None are expecting enemies or rivals, but most will look up on seeing any travelers entering the inn. The following moments of recognition are likely:

- The Yelmians will recognize the Pilgrim for what he is, a holy man of their god, and seek to aid him.
- The Thieves will recognise Griselda as their “mark.”
- The Thieves won’t see their companions: Enferelda and Lucky.
- Barnakt and Koschei won’t recognise anyone when they enter, but they may note that Inkarne has a Lunar pendant
- Pharandra recognizes Annstad. But Annstad will not recall Pharandra, she is “just another victim.” This ought to incense Pharandra even further.
- Barnakt and Koschei will spot Ralda as soon as Pharandra enters, and she will clearly recognise them.

When the PCs enter, there is a brief stirring, as people check the location of their weapons, but then Jafoska wanders over to greet the new arrivals, and find them a table to sit at. She is warm and welcoming, seeking to put the travelers at their ease. She offers them stew and heated wine for the cold. If anyone is obviously suffering from exposure, she seats them near the fire and brings a bowl of hot wine for them for free.

Jafoska makes small talk with visitors, but under this pretense she is trying to find out two things: if you are a threat; or if you are not a threat, would anyone miss you were you to end up as

food for the ghouls? As the GM you should tip your hand a little, asking pointed questions such as “No one back home worried with you out in this storm then?” You want to create tension, so it is fine to allow the PCs to grow suspicious of the innkeepers.

If anyone asks why Highwall Inn is safe from the ghouls, Jafoska shrugs and claims not to know, suggesting that perhaps some ancient magic protects the inn. She is lying, and those skilled at perceiving might note that.

If trouble brews, Baran emerges from the kitchen to try and stop it. Griselda may get Boz to intervene, if she can do so without risk to herself. She seeks to keep the peace.

This is the most free-form section of the game, and perhaps the hardest to run. You want to allow tension to build, perhaps even to the point of drawn swords and spears, but you don’t want violence, yet. Barnakt and Koschei should feel outnumbered and frustrated. Pharandra should be aware that her potential savior is the man who took her eye, but he will be uncaring about the issue—it means nothing to him. Orgorvale and Valmir should just meet blank stares in response to any queries about their missing friends. Palashee is a wild card at this stage, but might begin to sniff corruption in the air. He might want to frown at the soldiers’ drinking and gambling. They might grow to resent him.

Let everyone have fun role-playing. Frame simple contests as necessary when folks contend with each other. When the tension dips, use the next scene Runners to complicate matters further.

CONSEQUENCES

Annstad and Inkarne will resist fighting, as will Griselda, for now. The most likely confrontation is between Pharandra and the rebels. Annstad will support Pharandra’s right to keep her captive imprisoned, and Griselda will resist a breakdown of order in the inn.

It’s possible that despite your best efforts, violence will erupt. Don’t force that not to happen, but do remind players that it is too early to kill another PC before Escalation. Remember that in HeroQuest Glorantha you have considerable latitude in determining the narration of the outcome. Use that power now to leave some injured or captured rather than dead.



HOSPITALITY

The Heortlings have a hospitality oath known as The Greeting. It is common to exchange this when visiting with strangers in these lands. However, it is rare for The Greeting to be used at an inn. The greeting is an exchange in which a host, usually a noble, shows generosity to guests in expectation of reciprocal gifts, and is covered by the laws of Orlanth. Staying at an inn is an exchange covered by Issaries laws of coin instead. What binds the behavior of the guests then? First, on the royal roads, Sartar’s Peace prevails which makes an outlaw of those that engage in acts of banditry or thievery. On minor roads, like this one, social mores are enforced by the innkeeper and other guests. This makes remote inns dangerous, and guests are often wary of each other.

RUNNERS

DILEMMA

Someone, potentially one of Annstad's soldiers, looks out the upper floor window and sees a caravan of people fleeing across the snow towards the inn. Ghouls stream after them. A small pack of three is closing on them, and it is clear from the way that the caravan is strung out that some of its members are tiring, and that the ghouls will catch at least the stragglers. In the distance more ghouls can be seen arriving.

CHOICES

Do the PCs sally forth from Highwall Inn to help the caravan, before the ghouls overwhelm it?

CONSEQUENCES

The "caravan" is in fact a ruse. It appears to be a man, woman with babe in arms, another younger man and woman (playing the son and daughter of the "trader") and four mules. In fact, the "parents" are "cattle" from Brangbane's stead, Black Rock Village, called Venharl and Leika and a real baby in arms (but not the woman's and she can't breast feed when it becomes hungry) but the "son" and the "daughter" are ghouls.

They want to entice a rescue mission out of the inn. Their agreement with the innkeepers extends to the safety within the walls but not to those caught outside. And they are hungry and angry that their quarry escaped them.

If the PCs go out, the son and daughter try to ambush them, whilst the ghouls following will speed towards the melee. The human cattle will avoid the fight, but these are "pets" who have good status in the village, and even if "freed" they will work against the PCs to ensure their masters have their feast.

If the PCs don't go out then the ghouls fall on the caravan. To scare the guests at the inn the ghouls slaughter the man, woman and babe in the snow. The "pets" are genuinely surprised as they die, betrayed by their masters.

Afterwards, the ghouls camp outside the walls. Their numbers increase until there are about two-dozen of them. They don't feel the cold, and they simply stand motionless in front of the inn, watching. Every so often, as if by some unseen signal, they howl, and even inside the inn their terrifying screech assaults the ears of the living. If they have killed their "pets" then they butcher them in full view of the walls, and eat them after they have hung for a while.

Your goal here is to up the tension of the ghouls. The threat outside the inn may now seem greater than the threat from inside.

ESCALATION

UNDER SIEGE

DILEMMA

The ghouls surrounding Highwall Inn take one of their human cattle, give him a message, and then two of them throw their "pet" up onto the palisade. Their "pet" lands with a crunch on the spikes where he begins screaming, impaled on the palisade.

Someone inside the inn will go out, roused by the screaming. If no one else goes, Annstad will. He will invite the PCs to join him.

The impaled man on the wall babbles, blood welling from his lips as he talks.

"My lords demand the quarry that is their rightful hunt. It took shelter here, and my lords wish it returned to them. Three they will settle for, dead or alive, as payment. You have one hour. Or my masters will come to take what is theirs and more."

When the impaled victim has delivered his message the ghouls drag him back down. He screams as his flesh is rended by the palisade spikes. The ghouls raise a terrible scream as the spilt blood drives them into a frenzy of hunger and they feast.

CHOICES

The goal here is to ratchet up the tension inside the inn. Some may be willing to hand over the necessary bodies to the ghouls. The game is in the Escalation phase now and you should allow PC vs. PC killing if that resolves tension, and flows from character.

Most likely one of the NPCs is the first to suggest that they "give the ghouls what they want." Griselda may be willing to turn over Ralda after all "she's going to be crucified on a Death rune by the Empire anyway." If by this point either the rebels or the thieves have been revealed, she will point to either of those groups as well, and suggest that Annstad "do us all a favor and round up those bandits and thieves and hand them over to the ghouls."

Some Heortlings may be surprised that Griselda is willing to sell out fellow Sartarites to the Empire, but she is frightened and quite ready to think of her survival over others.

Annstad and Inkarne are less sure that they should hand anyone over. They may be servants of the Empire, but that does not mean they have any desire to support King Brangbane. Unlife is an enemy for them too. They may be less keen on "handing folks over." Still events might have made them keen to be free of other guests, for example Annstad may have been confronted by Pharandra, which might led to their agreeing to the plan.

CONSEQUENCES

Let this play out, again throwing in contests as required. As violence seems imminent, or spills out, run *Betrayal*.

BETRAYAL

DILEMMA

Jafoska sends Baran out to negotiate with the ghouls. He sneaks out through trapdoor and uses the tunnels to reach the ghoulish encampment.

Someone should spot Baran head down into the wine cellar; perhaps Jafoska mumbles something about needing to fetch more wine. But then he doesn't come back—for a far longer period than seems reasonable to fetch wine.

CHOICES

Give the PCs a chance to follow Baran. Give them a moment when Jafoska is distracted, and make it an auto-success if they have some ability to sneak past.

Baran has exposed the entrance from the cellar to the tunnels and tried to cover it again from the inside. He can't do a great job, so it should be an auto-success with a suitable ability to spot the strangely disturbed jars. Moving them reveals the tunnels beyond.

If someone follows Baran, do they have light, or another way to see? If not, they risk falling down a pit in the dark, as the *krashtkids* have tunneled in all directions. Baran has planks over the pits that lead to the exit, but seeing the planks in the dark is not easy. Baran uses an oil lamp, but pretty much knows the way by feel, and may extinguish his light if he hears any noise that means he suspects being followed.

When someone reaches a junction that leads in one direction to the *Krarsht* shrine and the other to the outside world, have them hear a faint cry for help from the direction of the shrine—Enferelda holds out hope of rescue.

If someone heads to the shrine then have them find the *Larder*.

If anyone raises suspicions with Jafoska, she waives them off. If they press, she goes to “Check on Baran” and appreciating the deceit may be over tries to summon *krashtkids* to help her kill the PCs.

If someone raises an alarm about the secret tunnel, having followed Baran, Jafoska will head down into the cellar to “help.” She will be determined to get into the tunnels and will use her magic to do so. Deceit is now over, and she needs to summon *krashtkids* to kill the guests.

Either way Jafoska's goal now becomes to kill the PCs before they can pass word on the inn's secret or if not, for her and Baran to escape.

CONSEQUENCES

If no one stops Baran, or someone follows Baran secretly and observes him, then he meets with the ghoulish thane, and demands to know why the agreement is not being honored. The thane says it is being honored, but many have evaded their hunt, and they only want to pursue their quarry.

Baran promises them a feast with three new bodies if they fall back. The ghouls ever anxious not to waste lives agree, but give him a time limit to prepare their feast.

Baran and Jafoska will then work to select some victims from amongst the travellers. They will try to pick off anyone that they think has no relatives or friends to raise a stink, or at least won't be missed long enough for them to kill the others. They are panicked though.

Most likely someone finds the *Larder* (in the *Krarsht* shrine). In this case you want to try and engineer a confrontation in the *Krarsht* shrine. Having Baran and Jafoska flee there, so that they can summon the help of the Waiting Mouth is the most likely trigger for the endgame.

THE LARDER

DILEMMA

Entering the *Krarsht* shrine leads to Enferelda and Lucky. They seem, at first, to be bound into the walls. They are in fact covered with *pratzim* a sticky cement that *krashtkids* use to make their lairs and initiates of the Waiting Mouth can hurl at their foes to bind them. Neither Enferelda or Lucky can move. Lucky is already dead from thirst and Enferelda is in a bad way, her tongue blackened and swollen, her eye lolling from side-to-side.

If Enferelda is roused, she will tell that Jafoska and Baran drugged their food, then moved them here in their sleep. Jafoska was clear, they would die, rot, and their rotten “game” corpses would be fed to the ghouls in a feast.

Enferelda knows this is a shrine, and that Jafoska and Baran come here to worship, but she has never paid much attention to their ceremonies.

CHOICES

Freeing Enferelda is like chipping away stone, the *pratzim* having set for days. When any PC strikes the *pratzim* the sound of their strike echoes through the tunnels. After a few blows the PCs hear movement, and feel a change in the air pressure. They realize something is coming towards them. They can flee, but will have to leave Enferelda to her fate.

CONSEQUENCES

The timing of this scene makes what happens variable. Whatever happens the PCs have to confront *krashtkids* spewing out of the pit in the center of the shrine. There should be at least one *krashtkid*, and up to three depending on the number of PCs. It is possible that the PCs also have to confront Jafoska and Baran, the caretakers of this shrine. If Jafoska and Baran can kill the guests, they can feed the ghouls and conceal the discovery of their deceit.

If this is the final confrontation, run this as an Extended Contest and use the Climatic Consequence/Results table.

RESOLUTION

ESCAPE

DILEMMA

The ghouls continue their vigil outside Highwall Inn, but their patience is running out.

CHOICES

Most likely there has been a confrontation with Jafoska and Baran, and their secret has been revealed. It is also likely that the PCs have found the tunnels by which they can escape. At this point, it's possible that the “time is up” on the ghouls deal and the ghouls begin storming Highwall Inn, determined to take their meals. In that case the PCs and any surviving NPCs may need to make a fighting retreat into the tunnels to escape. If the PCs moved to resolution fairly quickly after the ghouls issued their demands, then it is possible that they can just sneak away before anyone notices.

CONSEQUENCES

The tunnels allow the PCs to emerge, half-a-mile away from the inn.

As is the tradition with horror stories the storm abates as the PCs emerge from the tunnel, with the sun breaking through the clouds to reveal a sparkling white landscape. Travel looks possible, and certainly better than waiting for the ghouls.

It is possible that unresolved tensions between the PCs remain strong enough that they will want some confrontation now, but in many cases it is better to call a halt to this and let everyone wonder quite how these enemies would resolve matters once the threat from the ghouls and the murderous innkeepers is removed.

PLAY OF THE GAME

PC VS PC

If you are playing this scenario as a one-shot using the pre-generated characters, you are going to have PC vs. PC conflict (PvP). Some groups are mature enough to enjoy this, others struggle. The following guidelines help. Read them out to your players.

- Rule One: Everyone is playing to have fun. Don't have fun by upsetting another player.
- Don't forget that the contest is PC against PC, not player against player.
- No passing of notes, or private conversations between player and GM. Everything happens at the table where everyone can hear it. If you want your PC to betray another PC, then tell the GM out loud. If you feel uncomfortable double-crossing another PC publicly, then don't do it. Your inner voice is probably right.
- Don't use out-of-character knowledge to spoil fun, only to enhance it. If you hear another player describe to the GM how their PC will betray yours, only use that knowledge to saunter joyfully into the trap they just laid for you.
- Don't try to kill another PC before the second half. Your GM will tell you when this is. (GMs: this is at **Escalation**).
- If you do kill another PC, you want them to be as into it as you are. If they are not, re-think. Is there another way to best them? Do you need to do more to establish the moment so that they will be into it?

OPENING THE GAME

The game begins with **Blizzard**. Your goal here is to make the players introduce their characters, roll some dice, and establish through role-playing who they are. Keep it moving fast if you can, forcing the players to make rapid decisions. As you come out of the Blizzard and go into **Ghouls** you want to ratchet up the sense of peril. The odds are overwhelming; the PCs must find shelter or die. Use simple contests to keep the pacing quick. You want Highwall Inn to feel like a genuine refuge at the moment they arrive.

RATCHETING UP THE TENSION

Once the PCs are inside Highwall Inn, the game becomes about the tension between the various groups. Make the PCs roll the dice as they try to intimidate, threaten, and sneak around, trying to gain advantage over each other. This is the hardest section to GM. You don't want a bar-room brawl, but you want to go to the edge of one. In most playtests this has worked out that one side has the numbers to impose its will, and the threat of Annstad and his soldiers acts as an effective peacemaker. The PCs will enjoy the posturing at first, and the thieves may plot to rob Griselda, but soon it becomes clear no one can do anything about the situation.

At this point, up the ghoul threat again with Runners. This tends to bring some groups together against the ghoul threat.

SWITCHING TO THE NEW GOAL

When everyone seems to be orienting around the ghoul threat, in *Under Siege*, the tensions come back to the front of stage and with PCs aware that the gloves are off in the second half it should all begin to kick off. Let this play out for a little to see what occurs.

Whilst the ghouls and the other inhabitants seems like the threat, it's actually Jafoska and Baran that are the villains of the piece and in the endgame you move to reveal that. By this point the tension should be at boiling point but giving them an enemy inside that they can focus on tends to unite most groups. Most likely you will end with a confrontation in the Krarsht shrine and an escape from under the noses of their ghoul hunters.

INSPIRATION

A number of sources inspired this scenario. First was the movie *New Dragon Gate Inn*, itself a remake of *Dragon Inn*. The stand-off and murderous innkeepers come from that movie. Second was the Quentin Tarantino movies *From Dusk 'Til Dawn* and *Hateful Eight*. The first for the concept of strange bedfellows thrust together to fight the undead, and the second for it's inn full of murderous inhabitants.

A GM looking for inspiration before running this game could do worse than checking out those movies.



PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

HOW TO USE THE CHARACTERS

These characters are partially built. They are built enough to start play, and fit with the textual background given to their characters. But not all of their ability points or character creation points have been spent, allowing your players to tailor the characters further in play, or to their desires. All characters have two entries to note:

Additional Abilities: These are additional stand-alone abilities or break-outs that may be created in play.

Additional Character Creation Points: These may be used to improve any ability on a one character creation point for one rating point basis. No ability may be increased by more than 10 points through this approach. Remember that occupation and distinguishing characteristic started at 17, and one rune was at 1W the other at 17. All other abilities began at 13. This is because points may already have been placed into some abilities.

Abilities may be created that allow a PC to partake in a framed contest, as it happens. Character creation points may be spent after a roll has been made, to improve the result.

will only be wedded and bedded by a man that can beat you in a fight—it keeps unwanted attention away. Legends are part of a rebel's armory, use them to your advantage.

You know your gang will come to rescue you, until then, you bide your time.

Concept: Fiery Rebel Fighter

Cultural Keyword: Heortling 13

Tres Tribe Community: 13

Distinguishing Characteristic: Fiery 17

Runes:

⊗ Air 1W

Initiate of Vinga

(passionate, proud, unpredictable, violent)

⌘ Movement 17

⚡ Illusion 13

Occupational Keyword: Rebel Fighter (Mercenary) 17

5 additional abilities

12 additional character creation points, no more than 10 in one ability.

THE MOON DOGS

CAPTIVE: RALDA RED-HANDS

The Empire killed your grandfather, and drove your grandmother from her ancestral home near Grizzly Peak into the wet woodlands of the Far Place. You watched her, once a famous Uraldan god-talker, tend to pigs instead of cows.

When your father died fighting at Boldhome, she was all you had.

When your grandmother died, her heart broken by exile, you dyed your hair and became one of the Red Women and vowed never to raise children or cattle until the Empire was driven from Dragon Pass.

Ever since, you have lived in the wilderness with your band, the Red-Hand Gang, striking back at the Empire whenever and wherever you can. It's a hard life, but whenever you weaken, you think of your grandmother and her trials.

Some say your hands are red because you bathe in the blood of Lunar soldiers—in fact it's from the henna you use to dye your hair—but why deny a good story. It's like the rumor that you

MERCENARY

Quick Summary: A professional fighter

Gods: Orlanth, Humakt

Wergild: Cottar to Carl

Living Standard: Common

You make your living from fighting, and sell your sword to whoever pays best. You know how to use an axe as well as the commoner's weapon, the spear. You can use a javelin, sling or bow and arrow to kill your enemies at a distance. Whilst most men quake with fear at battle, you are brave enough to stand your ground in the shield wall. Your war cry intimidates your enemies when you charge across the battlefield. You have fought in enough battles to understand tactics. You know how to set an ambush and can lead others in battle. You can ride a horse but likely dismount to fight, although a few clans have a tradition of fighting from horseback. If you must, you can march long distances on foot.

Most likely you are a retainer of a chief orthane and called a "huscarl" (meaning "hall man"). He feeds and clothes you. You defend him and his property from enemies. You work for your lord because he is generous to you with gifts of gold and silver arm rings, horses, and fine weapons. Earning wealth through your skill at war will make you the envy of other men. Perhaps you hope to

be appointed a thane of a chief or king.

You might fight for the love of coin. A mercenary might be a huscarl, or might fight for a wealthy merchant or caravan. Or you might be a soldier in a mercenary company that fights in the many conflicts that rage through Dragon Pass. Or perhaps you fought in foreign lands and know their languages and customs. In that case you know how to survive in large battles and the tactics of foreign enemies. You know how to maneuver to the call of horn and pipe. You understand how to fight as a disciplined unit. You might have been a foot soldier wielding a two-handed axe or long spear, or you might have been an archer or slinger. Rarely, you are a cavalryman who learned to fight with a mounted spear or bow from horseback.

Air Rune Affinity (Thunderer)

As the source of the Air Rune, initiates of Orlanth can make the broadest possible use of the powers of Air. A very incomplete list of the abilities Orlanth initiates have been known to use the Air Rune affinity for includes: bring rain; predict weather; change the weather; endure weather (snow, wind, rain, etc.); call down thunder and lightning; fight other elements; fly (carried by winds or upon their own breath); create a hailstorm; enchant silver; summon and command the winds; hear and speak at a great distance; summon and command lesser air gods; and even improve their sword fighting (the sword is the weapon of the Air Rune). The Air Rune aspect of Orlanth is called the Thunderer, and those powerful with this rune affinity are passionate, proud, unpredictable, and violent

Movement Rune Affinity (Larnsting)

As the source of the Movement Rune, Orlanth initiates can make the broadest possible use of the powers of Movement and Change. A very incomplete list of the abilities Orlanth initiates have been known to use the Movement Rune affinity for includes: change shape; move other object; fight with incredible speed and accuracy; leap great distances; move quickly; run faster than the wind; run over water; throw a rock or javelin impossible distances with accuracy; transform something; and even transport instantly to a distant location. The Movement Rune aspect of Orlanth is called the Larnsting, and those powerful with this rune affinity are adventurous, dynamic, impulsive, and reckless.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT... ?

BARNAKT TWO-SWORDS

This proud old thane used to run your rebel band before you did. He was obsessed with fighting Harvar and the Yelmatio worshippers, but you managed to redirect everyone to taking on the Empire. And were damn good at it. That sticks in his throat

KOSCHEI THE BEARDLESS

Young, dumb, but full of vim, this “up for it” farm-boy is like a loving and loyal dog, seeking your approval. Make sure you praise him and he’ll do whatever you need. Maybe he will even live long enough to be an asset.

PHARANDRA GLITTERING-EYE

This Moonie bounty hunter tricked you. You underestimated her, don’t do it again. She is taking you to be hung, to fill her purse with gold. That is all she cares about. How typical that is of a Tarshite? You will have you revenge, you are a Red Woman.

BRIEFING FOR THE REBELS

Your leader Ralda Red-Hands has been captured by a Moon Dog, who won your trust as a new recruit, but turned out to be a bounty hunter, determined to bring Ralda in for the price on her head. She is only just ahead of you, and you know she is heading down the road to Herongreen. You need to catch her before she gets there.

MOON DOG:

PHARANDRA GLITTERING-EYE

You are a Moon Dog, one of the Empire’s hunters. You go out into the wilderness to bring back rebels; your reward is in silver, paid by the military governor, more for the ones you bring back alive.

You come from a family of slavers—so trafficking in people is in your blood, and you do it without qualm. You left that trade after a rebel killed your baby brother. He signed up with the Provincial Army for a tour of duty in Sartar out of duty to the HonEel dynasty. You signed up to get revenge on the rebel scum, who think they can hide.

You lost your eye in a bar fight in Alda-Chur, to one of Harvar’s priggish thanes: Annstad Long-Legs. He humiliated you, as well as taking your sight. You were less pretty after too.

The physical wound you healed by winning the Glittering Eye on the Blind Eyes Opened heroquest.

The emotional scars are harder to fix: you still bear a grudge against the man that plucked your eye out, and find your own visage, with its glittering crimson orb, disturbing. Best to avoid mirrors.

Concept: One-Eyed Bounty Hunter

Cultural Keyword: Tarshite 13

Mellmuri Tribe Community: 13

Distinguishing Characteristic: One-Eyed 17

Runes:

● Crescent Come Moon 1W

Initiate of Seven Mothers - Danfive Xaron subcult

Unerring Pursuit +1

⚡ Movement 17

✠ Man 13

Occupational Keyword: Bounty Hunter (Mercenary) 17

Companion (Magic Item): The Glittering Eye 13

⊙ 8W

Initiate of Irripi Ontor

Look All Around 17

See Clearly 13

3 additional abilities

12 additional character creation points, no more than 10 in one ability

MERCENARY

Quick Summary: A professional fighter

Gods: Orlanth, Humakt

Wergild: Cottar to Carl

Living Standard: Common

You make your living from fighting, and sell your sword to whoever pays best. You know how to use an axe as well as the commoner's weapon, the spear. You can use a javelin, sling or bow and arrow to kill your enemies at a distance. Whilst most men quake with fear at battle, you are brave enough to stand your ground in the shield wall. Your war cry intimidates your enemies when you charge across the battlefield. You have fought in enough battles to understand tactics. You know how to set an ambush and can lead others in battle. You can ride a horse but likely dismount to fight, although a few clans have a tradition of fighting from horseback. If you must, you can march long distances on foot.

Most likely you are a retainer of a chief or thane and called a "huscarl" (meaning "hall man"). He feeds and clothes you. You defend him and his property from enemies. You work for your lord because he is generous to you with gifts of gold and silver arm rings, horses, and fine weapons. Earning wealth through your skill at war will make you the envy of other men. Perhaps you hope to be appointed a thane of a chief or king.

You might fight for the love of coin. A mercenary might be a huscarl, or might fight for a wealthy merchant or caravan. Or you might be a soldier in a mercenary company that fights in the many conflicts that rage through Dragon Pass. Or perhaps you fought in foreign lands and know their languages and customs. In that case you know how to survive in large battles and the tactics of foreign enemies. You know how to maneuver to the call of horn and pipe. You understand how to fight as a disciplined unit. You might have been a foot soldier wielding a two-handed axe or long spear, or you might have been an archer or slinger. Rarely, you are a cavalryman who learned to fight with a mounted spear or bow from horseback.

Crescent Come Moon Rune

Glamours are created by drawing upon the impossible nature of the Cosmos to create temporary reality. A glamour is something you create.

A Lunar magician can use her Lunar Phase to create glamours mimicking the runes that Phase can replace.

Strictures: Strict discipline and unquestioning obedience to cult leaders.

☾ **Air:** tempered violence, strength, endurance, and hunting people or prey

Note: the Crescent Come Phase cannot create any glamours of the Middle Air (such as wind, rain, flying, lightning, and thunder).

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT... ?

Ralda Red-Hands - She is a murderous rebel, who has broken the hearts of many a Tarshite mother, who learned their boy was never going to come home. You beat her because she under-estimated other women, but that is probably not a mistake she will make twice. Her band are sure to be hot on your heels.

THE REBELS

REBEL: BARNAKT TWO-SWORDS

You were a Tovtaros thane, but you sought exile when you were asked to bend the knee to Harvar Ironfist. His magician, Inkarne the Shrew, murdered your brother Harshax, and you have never forgiven or forgotten.

You were the leader of a war band, Barnakt's Bastards, and you led them against Harvar; you fought the Cold Sun, you fought the Empire. But you lost their loyalty to Ralda Red-Hands.

Ralda was all about confronting the Empire, not Harvar or the Cold Sun, and her reckless guerrilla fighting brought both her and your band fame. But rebels died for that, and they were once *your* men, *your* friends.

People will die if she returns to lead your group, but the band wants her back—and they look to you to pull it off.

You are flattered by their trust, so now you are on your way to free her, but part of you wishes the Moon Dog might just succeed in carrying her off.

Concept: Proud Thane

Cultural Keyword: Heortling 13

Tovtaros Tribe Community: 13

Distinguishing Characteristic: Proud 17

Runes:

☾ **Air** 11

Initiate of Orlanth

(passionate, proud, unpredictable, violent)

⚔ **Mastery** 17

⚔ **Stasis** 13

Occupational Keyword: Thane 17

Two-Sword Fighting + 3

4 additional abilities

9 additional character creation points, no more than 10 in one ability

THANE

Quick Summary: A leader and military specialist

Gods: Orlanth

Wergild: Thane

Living Standard: Prosperous

You are a community leader and part of the clan or tribal elite. You were appointed to your position by the clan or by the tribal king and have been given lands and herds to support you and your household. You are given armor, weapon, horses and other treasures from the clan and your lord. You might have a hall where you live with your family and retainers, who work your fields, watch over your herds, and keep your house. Or you might live in the hall of the chief or king, and farm your land and herds out to carls and cottars. You have horses and know how to ride.

You might be one of the chief's elite bodyguards or the leader of an important family or bloodline.

Regardless, your most important responsibility is to be one of the clan's elite military leaders. You are trained in the axe, the spear, the javelin and the bow. You can fight equally well from foot or from horseback. You are given the best weapons and armor the clan can provide: axes, chainmail, metal helmet, and heavy shield. You lead assaults and raids against the enemy, and lead the defense of the clan's nobles in battle.

You know how to lead men and get them to do your bidding. You can speak inspiringly or bellow commands. You can spot lies and tell them if you need to. You know tactics and strategy and know how to plot and plan before acting, to win greatest advantage. And you are ruthless if you need to be: "a brave heart and bold action wins the day."

AIR RUNE AFFINITY (THUNDERER)

As the source of the Air Rune, initiates of Orlanth can make the broadest possible use of the powers of Air. A very incomplete list of the abilities Orlanth initiates have been known to use the Air Rune affinity for includes: bring rain; predict weather; change the weather; endure weather (snow, wind, rain, etc.); call down thunder and lightning; fight other elements; fly (carried by winds or upon their own breath); create a hailstorm; enchant silver; summon and command the winds; hear and speak at a great distance; summon and command lesser air gods; and even improve their sword fighting (the sword is the weapon of the Air Rune). The Air Rune aspect of Orlanth is called the Thunderer, and those powerful with this rune affinity are passionate, proud, unpredictable, and violent

MASTERY RUNE AFFINITY (KING)

Orlanth is associated with the Mastery Rune but is not its source. This Rune is the source of leadership and self-mastery. An incomplete list of the abilities Orlanth initiates have been known to use the Mastery Rune affinity for includes: awe crowd; command followers and community members; detect honor; invoke wyter; inspire loyalty; rally community; reciting poetry; silencing bellow; speaking words of power; and summon members of community. The Mastery Rune aspect of the Orlanth is called Dar (or King), and those powerful with this rune are just and proud

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT... ?

KOSCHEI THE BEARDLESS

Young, dumb, but full of vim, this "up for it" farm-boy is like a loving and loyal dog, seeking your approval. Make sure you praise him and he'll do whatever you need. Maybe he will even live long enough to be an asset.

RALDA RED-HANDS

A crazy Vingan, determine to spit in the face of the Empire. Tireless and tempestuous, she has been the best thing to happen to your band and the worst. Once you were Barnakt's Bastards, now you are just the Red-Hand Gang, named for Ralda's hands, which she bathes in the blood of her enemies.

BRIEFING FOR THE REBELS`

Your leader Ralda Red-Hands has been captured by a Moon Dog, who won your trust as a new recruit, but turned out to be a bounty

hunter, determined to bring Ralda in for the price on her head. She is only just ahead of you, and you know she is heading down the road to Herongreen. You need to catch her before she gets there.

REBEL: KOSCHEI THE BEARDLESS

You ran away from your home amongst the Tovtaros to fight the Empire. The Empire killed your mother and father, and you lived with your uncle and aunt who wanted you to grow up as a farmer, raising sheep. But you had too much of your father's recklessness in you, and many of your friends had already left, rather than live under the Empire. When you stumbled on a plan to capture Barnakt's Bastards and were able to warn them, they invited you to join their band.

You intend to become a hero, like the people the skalds sing of when everyone is gathered around the hearth at a feast. That is true immortality—to live on in the stories. Not that you are planning on dying, after all fortune favors the brave.

You idolize the old man, Barnakt, he has so much wisdom to share, but it is Ralda with her adventurous spirit, who is the true heart of your band now. You will free her.

Concept: Rash Farm-boy

Cultural Keyword: Heortling 13

Tovtaros Tribe Community: 13

Distinguishing Characteristic: Rash 17

Runes:

☯ Air 17

♯ Movement 1W

Initiate of Orlanth

(adventurous, dynamic, impulsive, restless)

⌘ Life 13

Occupational Keyword: Farmer 17

My Father's Spear + 2

4 additional abilities

11 additional character creation points, no more than 10 in one ability

FARMER

Quick Summary: A free farmer who raises grain and livestock

Gods: Orlanth (Barntar subcult), Ernalda

Wergild: Carl or Cottar

Living Standard: Minimal to Prosperous

You are the backbone of society, a free farmer who provides food for the clan. You know the land.

You know the seasons and you feel the weather in your bones. In addition to working the fields, you own a small herd of sheep or, if you are wealthy, cattle, as well as lesser animals like pigs and poultry.

If you are a man, you plow the fields. Plowmen work the soil with a team of four to eight oxen. It is hard work. You goad your ox team to drive your plow—a simple wooden ard with a bronze plowshare—through the soil. You must be strong to lift the rocks and boulders. You may have to work without rest. There is always a lot of work on the farm from fencing and dry stonewalls to barn

building, wood chopping, and haymaking. You are part of the clan militia—the fyrd. You do your duty, turning out for practice with your strong hat, sharp spear and stout shield. Maybe you have a sling, a bow or throwing javelins. If you are wealthy, you might own a sword and even metal armor.

If you are a woman, you sow the open-fields with seeds and coordinate the efforts to bring in the harvest. You spin wool and flax on the spindle and then weave it on your loom to make cloth. You participate in the ceremonies that bless the fields and the harvest.

If you are successful, you are a carl with your own long house and enough oxen to form a plow team. The clan allocates you fields to raise crops, and grazing rights for your herds. If you are poor, you might be a cottar, living either in a relative's hall or in a small cottage. You help a carl to work the lands the clan has apportioned to him, for which the carl gifts you with a share of the farm's produce. Even worse, you could be a stickpicker who cannot even afford to keep a cottage and must sleep in another man's house with the animals. Stickpickers are charcoal burners and wood gatherers, and few have a good word to say about them.

Air Rune Affinity (Thunderer)

As the source of the Air Rune, initiates of Orlanth can make the broadest possible use of the powers of Air. A very incomplete list of the abilities Orlanth initiates have been known to use the Air Rune affinity for includes: bring rain; predict weather; change the weather; endure weather (snow, wind, rain, etc.); call down thunder and lightning; fight other elements; fly (carried by winds or upon their own breath); create a hailstorm; enchant silver; summon and command the winds; hear and speak at a great distance; summon and command lesser air gods; and even improve their sword fighting (the sword is the weapon of the Air Rune). The Air Rune aspect of Orlanth is called the Thunderer, and those powerful with this rune affinity are passionate, proud, unpredictable, and violent

Movement Rune Affinity (Larnsting)

As the source of the Movement Rune, Orlanth initiates can make the broadest possible use of the powers of Movement and Change. A very incomplete list of the abilities Orlanth initiates have been known to use the Movement Rune affinity for includes: change shape; move other object; fight with incredible speed and accuracy; leap great distances; move quickly; run faster than the wind; run over water; throw a rock or javelin impossible distances with accuracy; transform something; and even transport instantly to a distant location. The Movement Rune aspect of Orlanth is called the Larnsting, and those powerful with this rune affinity are adventurous, dynamic, impulsive, and reckless.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT... ?

BARNAKT TWO-SWORDS

This proud old thane used to run your rebel band. He was obsessed with fighting Harvar and the Yelmialio worshippers, but Ralda redirected everyone to taking on the Empire. He is wise though, he has seen many winters through, and his advice always seems to help get you out of trouble that you just can't handle. You want to listen to him, he's just a bit... boring.

RALDA RED-HANDS

You have a crush on Ralda, but everyone else in the Red-Hand Gang would tease you without mercy if they knew. So you keep it to yourself. Could a woman like that, a hero who has fought the Empire, love a farm-boy like you? Hell, the woman's hands are stained red where she bathes her hands in the blood of her enemies, and they say that she will never be "wedded or bedded" unless a man can best in her in single combat.

BRIEFING FOR THE REBELS

Your leader Ralda Red-Hands has been captured by a Moon Dog, who won your trust as a new recruit, but turned out to be a bounty hunter, determined to bring Ralda in for the price on her head. She is only just ahead of you, and you know she is heading down the road to Herongreen. You need to catch her before she gets there.

THE THIEVES

THIEF: ORGORVALE HORSEFACE

Life never gave you much. You were born poor in a shack in Eural's Hill in Jonstown, never knew your father (who was probably a Lunar soldier who your mother lay with for coin), and were put out to work on the streets begging before you could even walk. You didn't want to earn your living lying on your back, and begged Enferelda the Knife to teach you the skills of the street bravo. She resisted, but you were persistent, passing all the tests she set for you to cheat and steal for her. She finally let you join her band. You have made some great scores together, and folks say you are the baddest crew in Jonstown. But this score, this score is going to make you famous.

Concept: Many-Faced Thief

Cultural Keyword: Heortling 13

Cinsina Tribe Community: 13

Distinguishing Characteristic: Many-Faced 17

Runes:

□ Earth 13

⚡ Illusion 14

Initiate of Lanbril

(deceitful, cowardly)

⚔ Disorder 17

Occupational Keyword: Thief 17

5 additional abilities

12 additional character creation points, no more than 10 in one ability

THIEF

Quick Summary: A criminal who steals others belongings

Gods: Orlanth, [Lanbril], spirits or petty gods

Wergild: Cottar

Living Standard: Minimal to Common

Theft amongst kin is a crime. Sartar made it a crime to steal from people on his roads and in his cities too. But you flout that law

and steal other's property for a living. If caught you will be an outlaw. You live in the city; it is the only place a lowlife like you can practice his trade without discovery. You may well be a beggar, who has no kin to support him. You may be disabled or disfigured by injury, or you may feign that you do. You may be a pick-pocket who cuts the purses of the rich in the crowded market place.

Perhaps you are a mugger, who intimidates money from his victims with a knife or strikes them from behind with a sap. You could be a skilled burglar who specializes in climbing in a second story window, picking locks, and stealing from strongboxes. Maybe you are a con-man whose quick patter, mastery of disguise and ability to lie convince your victims to fall for your elaborate schemes.

Whatever your skills, you will need to be streetwise and have eyes in the back of your head to survive in the city. You will need contacts in the underworld and among corrupt members of the city watch. You will need to be accustomed to moving in the shadows and hiding in dark places. You may have a gang, but just as commonly could work alone.

Illusion Rune Affinity

Lanbril masks his crimes and his actions with falsehood, concealment, and tricks. His cultists are known to use the Illusion Rune for a variety of criminal purposes, including: to lie convincingly; to block magical attempts to determine who committing a crime (including by divination); to move unseen and unheard; to blend in with one's surroundings; to conceal items; to disguise oneself; to appear exceedingly ordinary and forgettable; to mimic the voice of others; to feign one's own death. Other uses of this power is to manufacture magical dusts whose varying enchantments may cause the inhaler to sneeze uncontrollably, sleep, block any scent trail which might exist or that stink so badly even humans can track it by scent; or powders that may explode and create thick opaque clouds of smoke. Initiates strong in this rune are deceitful, indirect, and manipulative.

Disorder Rune Affinity

Lanbril practices his trade regardless of the consequences for others and delights in trickery and treachery. His cultists are known to use the Disorder Rune Affinity to: lie convincingly; to open locks; and to free themselves from bonds. Initiates strong in this rune are selfish, shameless and treacherous.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT... ?

ENFERELDA THE KNIFE

Your mentor, the mother you should have had. You worship and adore her.

"LUCKY" FARNDAR

A pretty boy, who men want to be, and women want to be with. The "face" in your operation and a consummate con-man.

VALMIR DANCES-ON-WATER

Your fellow rogue is an odd one indeed, not a follower of your god Lanbril but the worshipper of some Lunar knowledge god, Irripi Ontor. You are not quite sure how far you can trust him, but his knowledge has helped your crew pull off some daring heists, so he is certainly useful.

BRIEFING FOR THE THIEVES

The Goldentongue merchant Griselda Far-Walker has grown rich trading fungus from the trolls of the Sporewood to the alchemists of Jonstown. They pay a heavy price in silver for her wares, and rumors suggest that she even has mushrooms that can be made into a drink that guarantees the imbibor immortality. The alchemists resent the prices she charges for her monopoly, and let it be known on the streets of Jonstown that they would "ask no questions" if someone could supply her wares, at a cheaper price. You really can't believe that she hasn't been robbed before; she is a creature of habit, always staying at the Highwall Inn on her journey south.

Your partners in crime, Enferelda the Knife and "Lucky" Farndar should be waiting at the inn, posing as merchants from Jonstown looking to buy honey from Grubfarm in the Vale of Flowers. Your cover is a traveling puppet show. You put it about that you are members of the puppeteer troupe, but you are not.

THIEF: VALMIR DANCES-ON-WATER

You were born on the banks of the Oslir and raised as a bargeman's son. You sailed up and down the Empire, but two things remained the same: the settled folks were always afraid of travellers like the barge folk, and only deceit and lies let you live. A good knife, and your "water-dancing," the skill of using it, often ends many arguments.

You left the river behind and joined a circus, to see more of the world, to steal its secrets.

You left the circus after a knife, a fighting circle, and a dead ringmaster made it too hard to stay.

There are bodies everywhere behind you.

Never let them know you, never let them understand you. Secrets are power.

You became a thief in Furthest, and you kept stealing all the way to Jonstown, where you joined Enferelda the Knife's crew.

You worship Irripi Ontor, but to you he is not the scribe's god, he is the "book thief."

Concept: Mercurial Thief

Cultural Keyword: Tarshite 13

Cinsina Tribe Community: 13

Distinguishing Characteristic: Mercurial 17

Runes:

≠ Water 13

☾ Full Moon 14

Initiate of Seven Mothers Irripi Ontor subcult

⚡ Disorder 17

Occupational Keyword: Thief 17

Water-Dancing + 4

4 additional abilities

9 additional character creation points, no more than 10 in one ability

THIEF

Quick Summary: A criminal who steals others belongings

Gods: Orlanth, [Lanbril], spirits or petty gods

Wergild: Cottar

Living Standard: Minimal to Common

Theft amongst kin is a crime. Sartar made it a crime to steal from people on his roads and in his cities too. But you flout that law and steal other's property for a living. If caught you will be an outlaw. You live in the city; it is the only place a lowlife like you can practice his trade without discovery. You may well be a beggar, who has no kin to support him. You may be disabled or disfigured by injury, or you may feign that you do. You may be a pick-pocket who cuts the purses of the rich in the crowded market place.

Perhaps you are a mugger, who intimidates money from his victims with a knife or strikes them from behind with a sap. You could be a skilled burglar who specializes in climbing in a second story window, picking locks, and stealing from strongboxes. Maybe you are a con-man whose quick patter, mastery of disguise and ability to lie convince your victims to fall for your elaborate schemes.

Whatever your skills, you will need to be streetwise and have eyes in the back of your head to survive in the city. You will need contacts in the underworld and among corrupt members of the city watch. You will need to be accustomed to moving in the shadows and hiding in dark places. You may have a gang, but just as commonly could work alone.

FULL MOON RUNE

Glamours are created by drawing upon the impossible nature of the Cosmos to create temporary reality. A glamour is something you create.

A Lunar magician can use her Lunar Phase to create glamours mimicking the runes that Phase can replace.

Strictures: Never reveal the "full" truth, conceal who you are

• Illusions: concealment, and lying

• Fire: intellectual insight and bureaucracy

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT... ?

ENFERELDA THE KNIFE

She has been a good gang leader, devising some daring scores, and this is amongst them. But, she still regards you with suspicion as a Moonie. She wouldn't be loyal to you.

"LUCKY" FARNDAR

A pretty boy, who men want to be, and women want to be with. The "face" in your operation and a consummate con-man. You understand who he is, you have been that person yourself. You want his role in the band.

ORGORVALE HORSEFACE

A young and impressionable member of your band. You can use that. Get her to look up to you, to follow your teaching not Enferelda's. Not that you will share true secrets with her, just enough to have her eating the scraps from *your* table.

BRIEFING FOR THE THIEVES

The Goldentongue merchant Griselda Far-Walker has grown rich trading fungus from the trolls of the Sporewood to the alchemists of Jonstown. They pay a heavy price in silver for her wares, and rumors suggest that she even has mushrooms that can be made into

a drink that guarantees the imbiber immortality. The alchemists resent the prices she charges for her monopoly, and let it be known on the streets of Jonstown that they would "ask no questions" if someone could supply her wares, at a cheaper price. You really can't believe that she hasn't been robbed before; she is a creature of habit, always staying at the Highwall Inn on her journey south.

Your partners in crime, Enferelda the Knife and "Lucky" Farndar should be waiting at the inn, posing as merchants from Jonstown looking to buy honey from Grubfarm in the Vale of Flowers. Your cover is a traveling puppet show. You put it about that you are members of the puppeteer troupe, but you are not.

THE PILGRIM

PILGRIM: PALASHEE THE LANTERN

Yelmalo is the light in the darkness. And, oh the times, they have grown so very, very dark. The Hero Wars are coming, you see it in the visions you have from staring at the sun, or deep into the lantern flame. The Old World will end, a new world will come. His light must be the guide to that new world. His light must be the truth of that new world.

Now is the time to bring converts to the Cold Sun, Yelmalo. Fight against his enemies, darkness and trolls.

Purge mankind of corruption with the piercing light of his truth.

You are the preacher. You bring the word of the Cold Sun. You wear only thin woolen raiment, you carry only your spear and a lantern—for *his* light. It is enough. The Cold Sun will provide.

Orlanth is your rival, the darkness your enemy, and followers of Yelmalo may have fallen from his path.

You will bring them all into the light!

Concept: Zealous Preacher

Cultural Keyword: Tarshite 13

Vantaros Tribe Community: 13

Distinguishing Characteristic: Zealot 17

Runes:

☉ Light 10

Devotee of Yelmalo

Gift: Radiant Vigor + 1

Gift: Sunburst + 1

Gift: Pierce Illusions + 1

Gift: Blind with Light + 1

Defend Against Monsters + 1

Y Truth 17

W Mastery 13

Occupational Keyword: Priest 17

Geases:

Total Celibacy

Never Seek Shelter From Storm

Never Wear Armor

Never Believe an Orlanth Cultist

4 additional abilities

3 additional character creation points, no more than 10 in one ability

PRIEST

Quick Summary: Holy person who leads magical activities full-time

Wergild: Noble

Living Standard: Prosperous

You are a full-time leader of divine and magical activities. You have learned all the myths of the gods, their sacred stories and teachings. You know how to call upon the appropriate sacred story as suggested by the gods. You know the sacrifices to please the gods and to bring blessings and atone for guilt. You know how to perform divinations to determine the god's will. You know how to cross to the other side and reach your god's house on his holy days. If you fail in your responsibilities, your people will likely suffer terribly.

Your community chose you as a priest and they fully support you with lands, herds and a portion of all sacrifices given to the gods.

Light Rune Affinity

The Light Rune is a subset of the Fire Rune stripped of its heat. Yelmlio fought much during the Gods War and his initiates can use their Light Rune when fighting with spears, throwing javelins, or using the bow. Initiates often use their Light Rune to blind their foes with bright light, to demoralize Darkness and other things of the Underworld (such as the Undead) with the light of the Sun, or dazzle their foes with the glow of their shields or armor. Initiates can use this rune to purify themselves, defend themselves against the temptations of women and defilement, and remove temptation. Yelmlio provided protection for his people in the Great Darkness and amongst other magic his initiates can use their Light Rune to terrify and injure trolls, illuminate their surroundings, see in the darkness, and see great distances. Hawks and wrens are a combination of the Beast and Light runes, and Yelmlio cultists can use the Light Rune to speak to birds and command them. Horses are connected to the Light Rune as well and initiates can use their Light rune to help them fight from horseback, heal horses, and make them run fast. Initiates strong in this rune are pure, pious, chaste, and ascetic.

Feat ○ Defender Against Monsters

Yelmlio is ever the defender against monsters and rebels. You carry the Golden Shield that shines like the sky dome, and the Justice Spear that pierces monsters, trolls, dwarfs, elves, barbarians, firemen, and even cannibal women. Each time you fight against them, you force them off but always suffer wounds. But as long as you keep your Truth inviolate, you always survive.

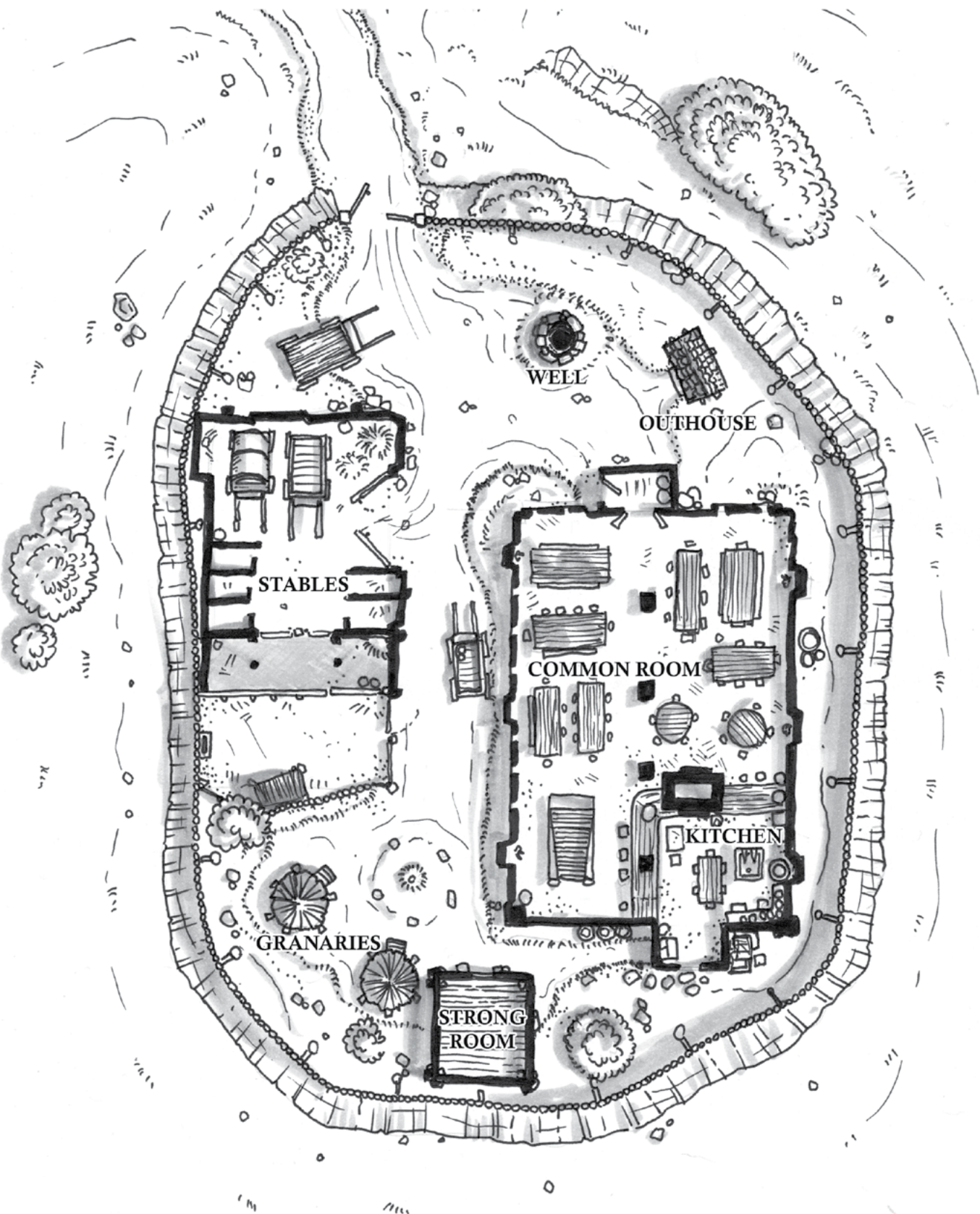
Truth Rune Affinity

Yelmlio's association with the Truth Rune comes from his steadfast dedication to his vows and his connection to the Light of Knowledge. Initiates have used his Truth Rune to reveal lies and falsehood, shining his light into dark corners. His initiates have used his Truth Rune to bind oaths, blind oath-breakers, burn away falsehood, expose lies, and reveal illusions. The intense discipline of the Yelmlio militia and Sun Dome Templars comes from their love of the Truth

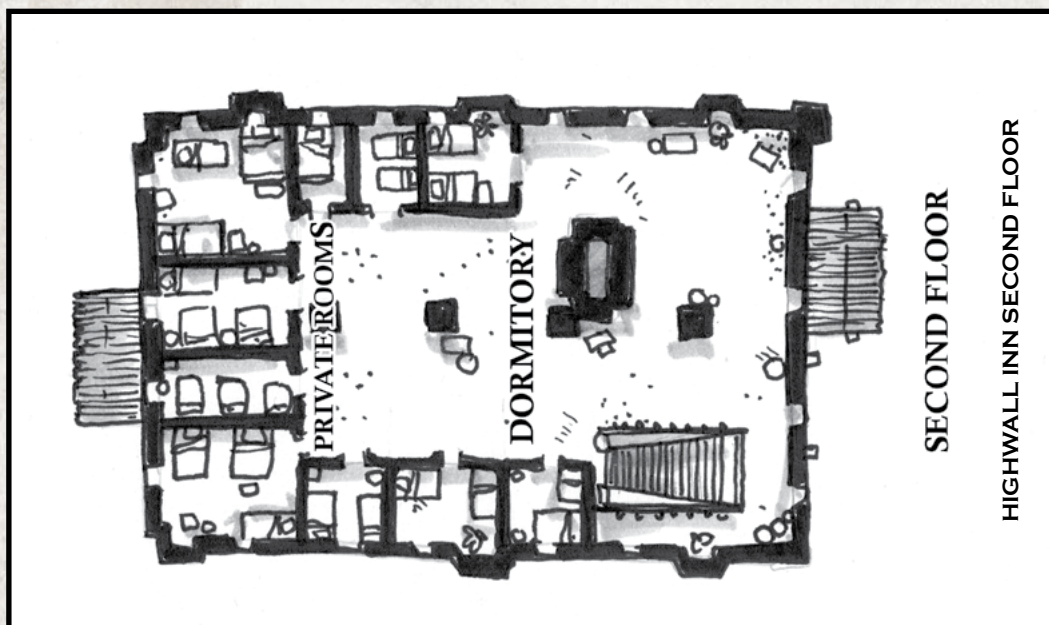
and initiates also use the Truth Rune to stay in formation, to fight as one, and to overcome the unvirtuous. Initiates who are powerful in this rune are aloof, steadfast, truthful, disciplined, and just.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT... ?

Corruption, darkness, fear... it liest all around. Bring them all to Yelmlio's light!

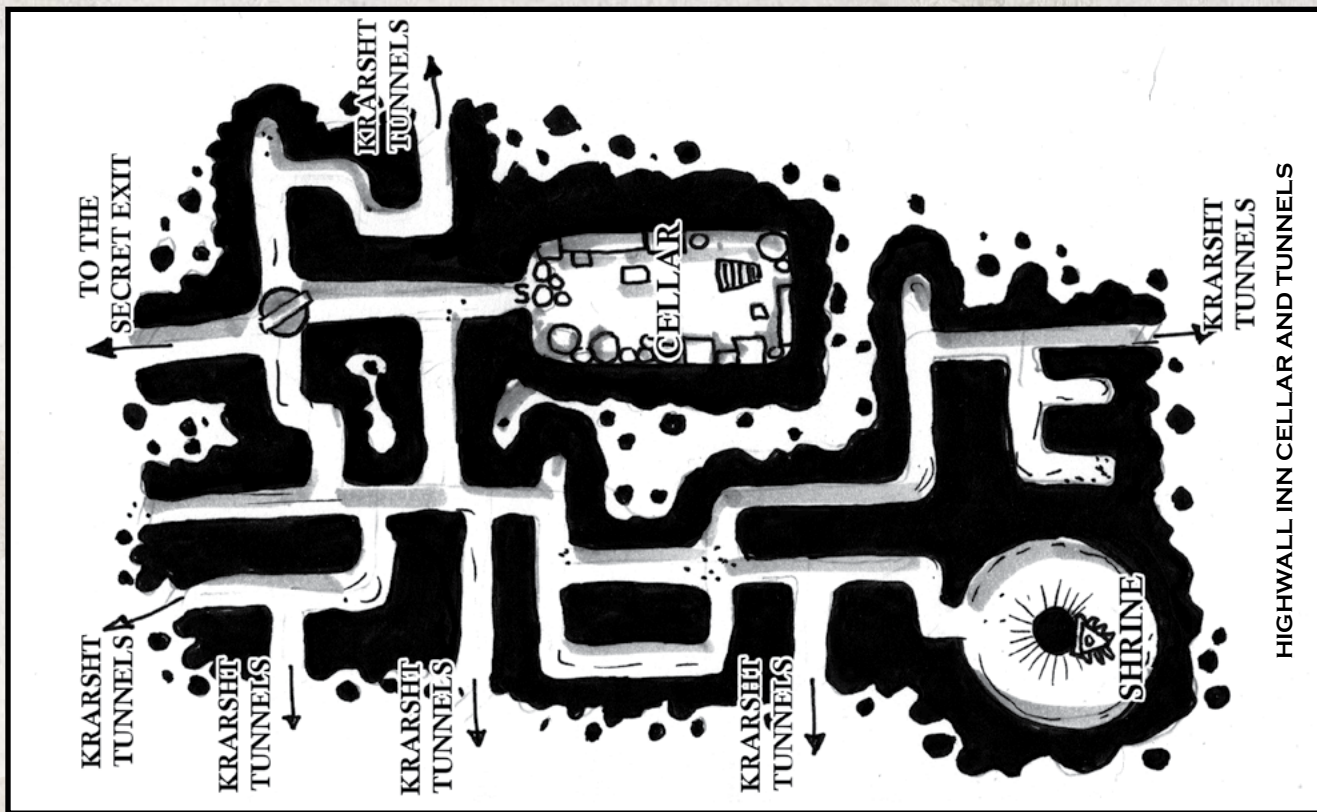


HIGHWALL INN LOWER FLOOR AND SURROUNDING ENVIRONS



SECOND FLOOR

HIGHWALL INN SECOND FLOOR



HIGHWALL INN CELLAR AND TUNNELS



GREG STAFFORD

(1948 - 2018)

**GAME DESIGNER, MYTHOLOGIST, SHAMAN, FATHER,
GRANDFATHER, HUSBAND, BROTHER, AND FRIEND**

*To honor Greg's memory the family requests, in lieu of flowers,
that you strike up a conversation with someone you don't know,
go somewhere you haven't been,
face a personal challenge head on,
read about something new,
and enjoy life.*

#WeAreAllUs